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## THE INDUSTRIAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND.

THE charms of English women in the days of the Tudors and the early Stuarts were admitted on every side. Erasmus had found there "girls with angels' faces." Travelers from the continent were ready with their praise, and the most lukewarm of their number rarely fell short of the verdict of Petruccio Ubaldini who pronounced the beauty of these English women "nothing inferior to . . . the most esteemed classes in Italy."<sup>1</sup> It was natural, therefore, that the Englishman should be partial to his countrywomen. But the student of industrial conditions is less interested in "fair maids Suffolk," than in Drayton's tribute to those of a more northern county:

Ye lusty lasses then, in Lancashire that dwell,  
For beauty that are said to bear away the bell.<sup>2</sup>

The drawbacks to health and a fine physical development were many. The homes of the laborers were small and slightly built. Landlords were often blind to the ruinous state of their cottages. The smoky atmosphere, the close proximity of the beasts that too frequently shared their master's quarters, the bleak exposure of the "turf-clad" tenement, were not conducive to soundness of body. Even the highest classes suffered from unsanitary surroundings. The dreary castle lighted by narrow slits in the ponderous walls, the stagnant moat, the reredos, the uncleanly, rush-covered floors, had not wholly disappeared from the island when Elizabeth ascended the throne. Swamps were numerous, and streets were foul. Shakespeare's father was not without blame, it is said, for the conditions in Stratford-on-Avon. The streets of London were scarcely better. On the court rolls of the manor of Scotter in Lincolnshire, in

<sup>1</sup> RAUMER, *History of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1835), vol. ii. p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Complete Works* (1876), vol. iii. p. 175.

1578, there was entered this "Item—that no man make no dunge hills within the Quenes hyewaye on payne of euery hill . . . xij<sup>d</sup>." In 1586 it was found necessary to impose a like fine upon persons throwing "kytte or caryon into the heigh waye."<sup>1</sup> Such were the homes and their environment. As women naturally spent more of their time indoors than did men, it is not surprising to learn that maidens were weaker in body than their brothers. For the worthy pedagogue who recorded the fact to allege a "moonish influence" as the cause seems scarcely necessary.

From the time of Henry IV. until the accession of Henry VIII. the food of the English consisted chiefly of meat and bread. Fresh meat and fish were not always to be had by the prosperous. Harrison, in his *Description of England* (1577), declared that the use of vegetables had been "not only resumed among the poor commons, . . . but also . . . as daintie dishes at the tables of delicate merchants, gentlemen, and the nobilitie."<sup>2</sup> Yet at the annual dinners of the Stationers's Company, where twenty "pastyes of venyson" were considered a small item, there was a great variety of flesh and fowl, with bread, sweets, and a little fruit. There were decorations, such as "a busshell and a halfe of Roses with pott flowres for ye wyndowes,"<sup>3</sup> but vegetables are not mentioned. As the sixteenth century advanced, however, the poor undoubtedly depended more and more upon the courser vegetables to vary their diet of salt meat. Their bread, too, was of the coarsest. Harrison complained that because of the high price of grain, "the artificer and poor labouring man . . . is driven to content himself with horrsecorne, I meane beanes, peason, otes, tares, and lintels, . . . and in time of dearth manie with bread made either of beans, peason, or otes, or of altogither, and some acornes among." "White meats, milke, butter, and cheese," according to the same writer, "woont to be accounted of as one of the chiefe staies throughout the Island, are now

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xlvi. pp. 385, 386.

<sup>2</sup> *Description of England* (ed. Furnivall), book ii. p. 259.

<sup>3</sup> ARBER, *Transcript of the Stationers' Registers*, vol. i. pp. 57-59, 137.

reputed as food appertinent onelie to the inferior sort.”<sup>1</sup> But with prices “never so deare” as in that time, laborers could hardly have indulged freely in those articles.

Yet in spite of any lack of that generous diet which the climate was believed to require, in spite of the want of sanitation, in spite of the swaddling of infants and the incasing of the fashionable lady in “yron” stays, the Englishwoman of the Elizabethan age was physically among the foremost of her day. “I might here adde somewhat,” says the author last named, “of the meane stature generallie of our women whose beautie commonlie exceedeth the fairest of those of the maine, their comelinesse of person and good proportion of limmes.”<sup>2</sup> Among the fish-wives set forth in a curious reprint, one was old and pale, some were sharp of tongue, some loved good ale; but they evidently came of a sturdy race. The fish-wife of Hampton was of a type to compare with the lusty lasses of Lancashire:

A body sound,  
A face full round,  
A forehead hye,  
.  
.  
.  
A colour ruddy.<sup>3</sup>

It was no new thing for women to share in work outside their homes. Perhaps there has never been an age when they have not had some part in seed-time and harvest. In the days of Langland, as may be gathered from the story of “Rose the regratere,” her sex spun and wove for those who would employ them, brewed ale and sold it to “lowe folk” or to those of higher degree, and peddled bread from door to door. They had been retailers of bread and the chief brewers for a century or more. Certain statutes<sup>4</sup> of the fifteen century relate to the mystery or trade of silkwomen, and to their complaints in regard to the competition of foreigners within the realm. In the reign

<sup>1</sup> Book ii. pp. 144, 154.

<sup>2</sup> HARRISON, book i. in Holinshed's *Chronicle* (1586), vol. i. p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> *Westward for Smelts*, Per. Soc. Pub.

<sup>4</sup> 33 Hen. VI. chap. v; 22 Ed. IV. chap. iii.

of Edward IV. trouble arose among the employees of the cloth manufacturers over the undesirable goods thrust upon them in lieu of a large part of their wage, and Parliament voted that "every man and woman being cloth-makers, shall pay to the carders, carderesses, spinsters and all other laborers in any part of the said trade, lawful money for all their lawful wages."<sup>1</sup>

In the palmier days of the gilds women were admitted as members on varying terms. They are thought to have been generally the wives of the craftsmen. Every male member, however, was at liberty to employ not only his wife but his daughters and maid-servant. Widows were allowed to continue the business of their husbands with full privileges, and it is asserted that in some companies there were other women independently engaged.<sup>2</sup> In the fourteenth century women were made an exception to the law against the pursuit of more than one trade.<sup>3</sup> Whether within the gilds or without, women did a large part of the heavy work in Angevin England.

Although the common law, in the sixteenth century, awarded the services and earnings of a wife to her husband, by an ancient "custom of London," a married woman in that city could carry on an independent business. She could sue and be sued. While the husband was of necessity a suitor in such cases, the wife was the "substantial party."<sup>4</sup> In the metropolis it was the woman lowest in the scale of labor who was most likely to suffer from the harshness of the common law. As the century drew toward its close, wage earners multiplied,<sup>5</sup> and in their ranks were many widows and single women whose needs forced them to seek work beyond their own thresholds.<sup>6</sup> Women of every age, condition, and rank had their representatives in the industrial world.

Few if any continental countries offered better industrial advantages to women than did England. There was no more striking contrast between the thought of Spain and of Holland,

<sup>1</sup> 4 Ed. IV. chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> BRENTANO, *History and Development of Gilds* (1870), pp. 40, 68. HIBBERT, *English Gilds* (1891), p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> 37 Ed. III. chap. vi.

<sup>5</sup> 31 Eliz. chap. vii.

<sup>4</sup> PROFFATT, *Woman before the Law* (1874), pp. 59, 77.

<sup>6</sup> 39 Eliz. chap. xv.

where civilization was tending in opposite directions, than in the estimate of women's work. In Spain work was degrading. The women of the aristocracy were exempt. Oversight of their own household was beneath them, although the trifling tasks to which fancy led them were well done. Embroidery was the chief resource of the Spanish lady. Among the poor the men were too proud to work, but not too proud to live by the toil of their wives. Whether in the fields or on the wharves, women were drudges. In Holland men and women stood side by side in home and shop. The Netherlands were the market of the world. When the men followed the sea, the women bought and sold, bespoke the custom of the foreigner in his own tongue, and computed their gains with the utmost accuracy. "Moreover," wrote Guicciardini,<sup>1</sup> "they are housekeepers and love their households." In Paris, also, women had a foothold in business. One of the rich merchants of the time was a certain Md. Dolve who dealt in silks.<sup>2</sup> They appear to have taken some share in the trades. Here, they ran the hostelrys; there, they managed the dairies. And everywhere embroidery and lacemaking became largely women's work.

English ladies of rank were mistresses of their own households. Young women reared at the court, where home-life was at a minimum, sometimes developed into notable housewives. Even the daughter of an earl was taught the management of domestic affairs. Where, as at Knole, the family included more than a hundred persons, with the maintenance of seven tables, oversight required not a little generalship. Nevertheless, great ladies frequently knew the details of their homes. "Good M<sup>ris</sup> Kircum: I perceve by my Lo: [Lord's] man Shapton that you are very desiorus to have a searvant that hath served me," wrote the Countess of Bath to the sister of Sir George Cary in 1594. "She can washe and sterch very well, and what else you will employ her to."<sup>3</sup> And the noble lady proceeded to give particulars concerning the wages and livery wished by the maid in

<sup>1</sup> In CAMPBELL'S *The Puritan* (1892), vol. i. p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> MICHIEL, in *Cal. St. P. Venetian*, vol. iii.

<sup>3</sup> *Trevelyan Papers*, part 3, p. 27.

question. The great houses seem to have been domestic training schools as well as polite seminaries, and the servants so brought up to have been in demand. It was quite proper, in the opinion of one of the most conservative earls of the day, for ladies in his wife's station, "to see that their women . . . kepe the linnen sweete," and "that spoile be not made of household stuffe."<sup>1</sup>

Among country gentlefolk, the linen itself, as well as other cloths, was spun and sometimes woven under the eye of the mistress. The most of the apparel of the country gentleman was of domestic production. Mrs. Joyce Jefferies, whose home in the days of the civil war was in the town of Hereford, and who was wont to provide a generous wardrobe for her favorite goddaughter, presented that young woman with "a woollen gown 'spun by the coock's wife, Whooper,' liver-coloured, and made up splendidly with a stomacher laced with twisted silver cord."<sup>2</sup> It was the superior skill of "my lady" that directed the maids in their sewing or in the intricacies of the popular "drawen worke," while the gleam of her own needle or the twirl of her spindle filled many intervals.

In some families the wife was much restricted in her own domain. In others her cares extended to the replenishing of stores and the repairing of buildings. Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, whose views on the duties of women were of the narrowest, admitted that "in this state of England wives commonly haue a greater sway in all ovr affairs than in other nations, Germany excepted." He noticed that the men who were called to serve the government at home or abroad were apt to intrust the management of their estates to their wives, a wonder to him who saw "soe many faule into the absurdite every day."<sup>3</sup> His own daughter, Dorothy, Countess of Leicester, was an efficient woman; and it is almost startling to find an earlier lady of that title, Amy Robsart, directing the sale of the

<sup>1</sup> HENRY PERCY, Earl of Northumberland, in *Archæologia*, vol. xxvii. pp. 339, 340.

<sup>2</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxxvii. p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxvii. pp. 337, 342.

wool from her husband's sheep in a very practical way. Economy was not despised in the greatest families. Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, was called "a perfect mistress of forecast and aftercast." She owed her training, as well as the possession of her lands, to her mother, Margaret, Countess of Cumberland; and many a man traced the prosperity of his house to the prudence of wife or mother.

"Huswifery in the country," in the opinion of John Lyly, "was as much praised as honour in the Court."<sup>1</sup> It was held in good esteem at the court itself. There were no matrons in attendance upon Elizabeth who could not, at home, "help to supply the kitchen with a number of delicate dishes of their own devising."<sup>2</sup> Sir John Harrington mentioned with pride that the "Queenes Majestie tastede my wife's comfits, and did moche praise her cunninge in the makeinge." His after bidding to send no more because of "other ladies jealousie,"<sup>3</sup> shows the rivalry in culinary skill. The men of that day were as fond of a good table as any of their descendants. Some were prolific in their directions for all branches of housekeeping. They wrote cook-books for maid and lady. If the English cook did not understand her business, and the English mistress, as a rule, was equally ignorant—an assertion which W. Carew Hazlitt<sup>4</sup> cites Evelyn to prove—the books may have deserved a part of the blame. In any case, a lady occasionally won her husband's praise, not to speak of a wider popularity. The old receipt-books bear witness to the skill of the inventor in such dainties as "Mrs. Leeds' cheese cakes" and "the Countess of Rutland's . . . Rare Banbury Cake." Effort was not lacking. It was human nature that women should be watchful over their own. "I am bowld to send your pale thin cheeks a comfortable litle breckfast agaynst the contagion of this tyme,"<sup>5</sup> was the message from the aged Lady Russell to her nephew Robert Cecil, who was on

<sup>1</sup> *Euphues* (1868), p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> HARRISON, book ii. p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> *Nugae Antiquae* (1804), vol. i. pp. 166, 167.

<sup>4</sup> *Old Cookery Books* (1886), pp. 69, 70.

<sup>5</sup> ELLIS, *Original Letters*, first ser., vol. iii. pp. 40, 41.



the point of a journey. Cooks are sometimes born, and of those the age doubtless had its share.

The making of confections and preserves, and the distillation of the innumerable "waters" requisite for a well-stocked store-room, filled many of "my lady's" morning hours. She became an adept in the use of her stills "of tin or sweet earth." There were

Conserves of barberry, quinces, and such,  
With sirops,<sup>1</sup>

and vinegars and cordials and rose-water, besides distillations of the "blessed thistle," betony, dill, eyebright, fumitory, hyssop, and mints. *The English House-Wife* names twenty-two of these waters, and "a world of others."<sup>2</sup> *Aqua vitæ* was not the least among such preparations. Many a flower and herb went to its composition, wherein wine or strong ale with sack lees was used instead of distilled water. Verjuice, a favorite accompaniment of mutton and a necessary for the cook, was obtained from the fruit of the wild crab gathered from the hedgerows. As the liquid flowed from the press and was turned into the receptacles which were to hold it, the housewife's finishing touch was the addition of a few handfuls of damask roseleaves. She was expected to understand the selection and care of wines. The brewing for the family was a domestic matter for which she must give orders. Her malt was a home product. Gervais Markham, in speaking of the process, claimed that

this office . . . belongeth particularly to the Housewife; and though we have many excellent men-maulsters, yet it is properly the work and care of woman, for it is a housework, and done altogether within doors, where generally lyeth her charge; the man only ought to bring in, and to provide the Grain, and excuse her from portage or too heavy burthens; but for the Art of making the malt, and the several labours appertaining to the same, even from the Fat to the Kiln, it is only the work of the Housewife and the Maid-servants to her appertaining.<sup>2</sup>

From the choice of her barley or, if need were, of oats, to the storing of the malt when ready for use, she had to exercise

<sup>1</sup> TUSSAR, *A Book of Huswifery* (1812), p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> MARKHAM, *The English House-Wife* (1675), p. 101 *et seq.*

judgment. Her methods at a certain stage were pronounced better than those of men, who usually turned the grain with a shovel. "They are for the most part Women-malsters which turn all with the hand, and that is the best . . . way; for there is not a grain which the hand doth not remove and turn over and over."<sup>1</sup> And so from her own malt<sup>2</sup> ground, in frugal households, in her own quern, the mistress brewed the liquor everywhere held to be as necessary as bread. In the early spring she made a stronger quality known by the name of the month.<sup>3</sup> Was it for economy's sake, or because of her superior product, that Lady Bacon now and then sent a hogshead of her March beer to her sons Anthony and Francis?

No rank is ever without its drones, but with the exception of that portion of the aristocracy who, under the Stuarts, devoted themselves to the dissipations of the capital, the wives of the richer tradesmen<sup>4</sup> of London led more idle lives than any other class of Elizabethan women. Rising at a late hour, they gave the care of the household almost entirely into the hands of servants. But they were epicures withal; and the marketing, they took upon themselves.<sup>5</sup> Naturally, they fell a prey to Ben Jonson's "humours;" and it is by no means a sly thrust which

<sup>1</sup> MARKHAM, pp. 153, 154, 173.

<sup>2</sup> "For 80 boz of barley mault I sould for feare of the earle of Stanford's plundering of my howses in heriford, . . . I had 3s. 8d. a boz, cam to . . . 14l. 3s. 4d." —MRS. JOYCE JEFFERIES'S Acc't Bk. in *Archæologia*, vol. xxxvii. p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> Three hogsheads of common beer were drawn ordinarily from a quarter of malt, and afterward one hogshead of "small drink," if desired.—See MARKHAM, p. 181. Mrs. William Harrison mixed with her malt "halfe a bushell of wheat meale and so much of otes small ground." Three several times she poured over the mixture 80 gallons of boiling water. The second was drawn off, reboiled, and passed again over the malt, after which the three were poured together. Details are given in HARRISON, book ii. p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> "Citizens and burgesses haue next place to gentlemen, who be those that are free within the cities, and are of some likelie substance to beare office. . . . In this place also are our merchants to be installed as amongst the citizens (although they often change estate with gentlemen, as gentlemen do with them, by a mutuall conuersion of the one into the other), whose number is so increased in these our daies." HARRISON, book ii. p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> *Every Man out of his Humour*, Act II. sc. iii.

he makes at "the fineness and delicacy of their Diet, diving into the fat Capons, drinking your rich wines, feeding on Larks, Sparrows, Potato-pies, and such good unctuous meats."<sup>1</sup>

Among the yeomanry,<sup>1</sup> on the contrary, the wife was the busiest of mortals. With her family she must be stirring at five in winter and at four in summer. She must be carver at the early breakfast for the farmer folk. She must not only oversee her maids in their unceasing round, but help at numberless points. As cook, "she must not be butter-fingered, sweet-toothed nor fainthearted."<sup>2</sup> She must superintend the making of the several kinds of bread to be provided for her family, the servants and "the hinds." The bake-house with its bolting-house and sieves attached, its "troughs to lay Leven in," its moulding-tables, its brake for kneading or "dough-sheet" for treading the dough, and its large brick oven, was the heart of the culinary department. In preparing the manchets or white bread for her own family, the housewife had evidently to begin at the foundation.

First, your meal being ground upon the block stones, if it be possible, which makes the whitest flower, and boulded through the finest boulding cloth, you shall put it into a clean kimmel [large tub], and opening the flower hollow in the midst, put into it of the best Ale Barm the quantity three pints to a Bushel of meal, with some salt . . . then put in your Liquor reasonably warm and knead it very well together with both your hands, and through the brake; or for want thereof, fold it in a cloth, and with your feet tread it a good space together, then letting it lie an hour or thereabouts to swell, take it forth and mould it into manchets rounds and flat, scotch them about the

<sup>1</sup> Yeomen are those which by our law are called *Legales homines*, free men borne English, and may dispend of their own free land in yearelie reueneue to the summe of fortie shillings sterling . . . This sort of people haue a certeine preheminence, and more estimation than labourers, and the common sort of artificers, and these commonlie liue wealthilie, keepe good houses, and trauell to get riches. They are also for the most part farmers to gentlemen, . . . and with grasing, frequenting of markets, and keeping of seruants (not idle seruants as the gentlemen do . . .) do come to great wealth . . . often setting their sonnes to the schooles, to the uniuer-sities, and to the Ins of the Court, or otherwise leauing them sufficient lands where-upon they may liue without labour, do make them by those means to become gentlemen." HARRISON, book ii. p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> MARKHAM, p. 51.

waste to give it leave to rise and prick it with your knife in the top, and so put it into the Oven, and bake it with a gentle heat.<sup>1</sup>

The best cheatbread, made of a coarser wheat flour, was raised with "a sower Leven . . . saved from a former batch," as was that for the hinds, "the coarsest bread for man's use."<sup>2</sup> Every kitchen had its spits for roasting, and such feasts as the roasting of "a Chine of Beef, a Loyn of Mutton, a Capon and a Lark, all at one instant and at one fire, and have all ready together, and none burnt,"<sup>3</sup> called for no little skill. The housewife must also look after the fruits and herbs in their season. She must aim to furnish her table from the products of the farm. Every month recurred the brewing. And often, as once upon a time at the home of Gabriel Harvey's parents, a chance visitor might have spied in "ye maulthowse . . . ye . . . mother and sister with sum of their servants, sum turning ye mault, soom steaping."<sup>3</sup> The curing of meats, the swingling and heckling of hemp and flax, the carding of wool, the spinning, scouring and bleaching of yarn, the making and mending, all were to be brought in with the daily stint. And as darkness shut down, it was the housewife's hand that turned the key on cupboard and chest, on dairy and buttery; her eye which saw that all was made tidy, that "leavens" were set and fire was saved. The prosperity of the family was confessed, even by the rhymers, to be largely in her keeping.

For husbandry weepeth,  
Where huswifery sleepeth,  
And hardly he creepeth  
Up ladder to thrift.<sup>4</sup>

The humbler homes, from some of which came many of those writers who crowned the age, are of equal moment, but their annals are proverbially obscure. It is interesting to learn that, in a household like Dr. Dee's, where two servants and sometimes a nurse were kept, the wife was given money for the month; and

<sup>1</sup> MARKHAM, pp. 73, 185, 186.

<sup>2</sup> Made of "Barley 2 bush., of Pease 2 pks., of Wheat or Rye a peck, a pk. of Malt." MARKHAM, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> HARVEY, *Works* (1884), vol. iii. p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> TUSSAR, p. 236.

that on one occasion, perhaps the eve of one of the astrologer's continental trips, she "had eleven pounds to dischargde all for thirteen wekes next."<sup>1</sup> In homes like John Shakespeare's there was little space for servants, even if there had been money to pay them. Where the family drew around one fire in the room which served for all the uses of the day, it was likely to be the hand of the wife and mother which swung the heavy kettles to their place on the crane. Drudgery could have been no stranger to Mary Arden and Anne Hathaway. Bishop Hall's description of the cot of the poor copyholder<sup>2</sup> doubtless pictures the lowest portion of the class:

Of one bay's breadth, God wot ! a silly cote,  
Whose thatched spars are furr'd with sluttish soot  
A whole inch thick, shining like black-moor's brows,  
Through smoke that down the headless barrel blows.  
At his bed's feet feeden his stalled teem ;  
His swine beneath, his pullen o'er the beam.  
A starved tenement.<sup>3</sup>

The possibilities remaining to the home-maker under such conditions were few. But the cottage, however poor, was not always shared with the beasts. The discomfort of cramped quarters was often lessened by the old practice of washing the linen in some convenient stream or pond ; and in the days of the Tudors, the arms of the great-cross in the market-place in Stratford-on-Avon were frequently adorned with the fluttering garments washed by the good wives at the neighboring pump. And in those lowly homes, the poetry of housekeeping was not wholly wanting. The preparations for a summer festival, the

<sup>1</sup> DEE, *Diary*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> "The fourth and last sort of people in England are daie labourers, poore husbandmen, and some retailers (which haue no free land), copie holders, and all artificers, as tailers, shomakers, carpenters, brickmakers, masons, etc. . . . [They] haue neither voice nor authoritie in the commonwealth . . . yet . . . in cities and corporate townes, for default of yeomen, they are faine to make up their inquests of such maner of people. And in villages they are commonlie made churchwardens, sidemen, ale conners, now and then constables, and manie times inioie the name of hedboroughes. Unto this sort also may our great swarme of idle serving men be referred." HARRISON, book ii. p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> HALL, *Works* (1839), vol. xii. p. 255.

making of a bridal cake, an excursion to the hedges or woods whence she returned loaded with wild crabs, flowers, and green boughs, brought sunshine and song to the mistress of the cottage which could boast of but a single room.

Domestic service wore a different aspect in the Elizabethan era from that developed in following periods. It is a matter of course that the queen should have been served by noble ladies, if not that the secretary of state should have served now and then as her private amanuensis. But every noble lady or gentlewoman whose fortune warranted it, had gentlewomen in her service. Lady Compton placed two at the head of her list of attendants. On becoming a countess she wished the number doubled. One of Middleton's characters, Mistress Openwork, feels herself superior to the tradesman whom she has married. "I came to him a gentlewoman born. . . . 'Tis well known he took me from a lady's service, where I was well beloved of the steward; I had my Latin tongue and a spice of the French, before I came to him."<sup>1</sup> Although many women married into a rank lower than their own, it is not to be inferred that such service told seriously against them. Lady Hatton mentioned the marriage of her "waiting-woman, a gentlewoman of good house and well allied," to "Sir Walter, now Lord Aston." Like Margaret Clement, niece of Sir Thomas More, the maiden was sometimes related to those she served. The daughters of less fortunate private gentlemen were glad to enter the homes of lawyers or merchants.

Such gentle service seems to have met the needs of the housekeeper, who was by no means sure of efficient helpers from the lower ranks. London had its enchantment for the lowest as for the highest. The maid as well as her superiors could gain entrance to the theater, and it was a complaint of the day that

Thither our city damsels speed,  
Leaving their mistress' work undone.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps Sir Thomas Overbury aimed at a striking "character"

<sup>1</sup> *Roaring Girl*, Act II. sc. i.

<sup>2</sup> SYMONDS, *Shakspeare's Predecessors* (1884), p. 310.

rather than at truth when he compared chambermaids to lotteries, and affirmed that "you may draw twenty ere one worth any-thing." But Lady Brilliana Harley, a woman of exceptional firmness and ability, was nevertheless troubled by the tempers and jealousies of her servants, and longed for the assistance of a well-trained gentlewoman. "I haue no body aboute me, of any judgment, to doo any thinge,"<sup>1</sup> she wrote. The other side of the subject appears to have found expression long before (1567), in a small black-letter volume entitled, *A Letter sent by the Maydens of London to the vertuous Matrones and Mistresses of the same, in defense of their lawfull Libertie. Answering to the Mery Meeting by us, Rose, Jane, Rachell, Sara, Philumias, and Dorothie*. It was evidently written—not by one of themselves—but by one willing to voice their views, and in reply to an attack upon their class.

For what be the causes wherefore he wold have us restrained of our liberties? Forsoth because of privie contracts he would not have us resort to Playes: he findeth fault with our great expenses in banqueting, and accuseth us with pilferring and pycking of meate and candels from you.

The second charge was denied; the third, referred to the mistresses themselves as the best judges of its falsity. On the first point it was claimed that

all the weeke dayes we are continually busied and the Author findeth faulte but for the Holiday: the forenoone whereof we spend at church, or about necessarie businesse at home: and so much time have we not in the after-noone, that we can farre stray abrode, sith commonly they ring the first peale to Evensong before that we have halfe washed up our dishes. Then must we either to church againe, or tarry at home to dress your suppers, for fewe commonly use to fast on Sundayes or Holy dayes, in London especially.<sup>2</sup>

There were households fortunate in the long and faithful service of those who, perhaps, had grown up in their midst. The mistress evinced her interest in their welfare, not merely by the character of her gifts, but in her intercourse with them. The master sometimes remembered them in his will with "so many pounds apiece as they severally had been and continued

<sup>1</sup> HARLEY, *Letters*, pp. 6, 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, pp. 6, 13.

years in my service.”<sup>1</sup> If a desire for change at length overpowered them, they turned from the door with substantial tokens of goodwill from all the family.

Among the employees in great houses, women appear to have been largely in the minority. The care of the linen was their special province. Cooks were “for the most part musically-headed Frenchmen.”<sup>2</sup> The gentry, as well as their superiors, often secured men for that office, and occasionally discharged them for incompetence. Anne, Lady Bacon, referred in her letters to “Peter, my cook,” and to “the boy of my kitchen, a shrewd-witted boy and prettily catechised, but yet an untoward crafty boy.”<sup>3</sup> At Knole the cooking was apparently given over to men. In kitchen and scullery there were four men to two women. At Homcastle, a manor in Worcestershire and the home of the Jefferies, an ancient family, the character of the employees in 1644 was most noteworthy. On the day of Worcester fair Mrs. Joyce Jefferies, according to her wont, made them presents: “videl: Hester Packer, y<sup>e</sup> butler, Elinor burraston y<sup>e</sup> coock, Barbara y<sup>e</sup> day maide, and Elysabeth Joanes y<sup>e</sup> baker, to eche . . . 1<sup>s</sup>.”<sup>4</sup> Did the exigencies of war and the scarcity of men have anything to do with the presence of a woman as butler? In general, the humbler the establishment the greater became the proportion of women among the employees, until, in the domicile where one pair of hands compassed all the drudgery, the woman held an uncontested title to the place. “Go your ways,” exclaims the Welsh parson to Simple, “and ask of Dr. Caius which is the way: and there dwells one Mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.” “I may call him my master, look you,” whispered that individual to the messenger, “for I keep his house, and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and

<sup>1</sup>*Alleyne Papers*, xxv.

<sup>2</sup>HARRISON, bk. ii. p. 144. OVERBURY, *Works* (1856), p. 144.

<sup>3</sup>SPEDDING, *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, vol. i. p. 115.

<sup>4</sup>*Archæologia*, vol. xxxvii. p. 220.



drink, make the beds, and do all myself, . . . you shall find it a great charge, and to be up early and down late."

There was no rapid shifting of servants or masters in that day. The law took particular note of laboring folk, and regulated the term of service and the wage.<sup>1</sup> Cooks, bakers, and various other workers were hired by the year. Neither party could sever the contract during that period without cause satisfactory to two justices of the peace. A woman of Stratford-on-Avon deserted her employer in 1611, failed to give a valid excuse, and was condemned to several months' imprisonment. The *Letters Sent by the Maydens of London* recounts the case of a girl who wished to leave the service of a master loath to lose her. The alderman's deputy decided in her favor. "For why: she was by the year hired, hir time was expired, she ought no longer service, she was overcharged with worke, she had complained and found no amendment, she sought for more easement, she liked not that entertainment."<sup>2</sup> If a servant wished to leave at the end of her year, a quarter's warning was required. The unemployed woman could be sent to gaol for refusing to work. The freedom of the individual was not broadly recognized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In the fifth year of Elizabeth's reign, Parliament repealed all previous acts regarding the amount of wages, and made new provision.<sup>3</sup> The justices assembled yearly in their several shires were to fix the rates for laborers and servants; and the women who would be self-supporting were forced to acquiesce in their decision. They were paid quarterly. Holinshed, in speaking of a "great man's" household, tells of the "great wages trulie paid them everie quarter, and board wages everie Sundaie or plentie of meat and drinke and lodging on good feather beds."<sup>4</sup> By a decree of justices in 1594-5, a girl under fourteen was forbidden more than food and clothing.<sup>5</sup> Wages varied with the

<sup>1</sup> 5 Eliz., chap. iv.

<sup>3</sup> 5 Eliz., chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Chronicle*, vol. iii. p. 1171.

<sup>5</sup> ROGERS, *Agriculture and Prices* (1882), vol. vi. 690. HAMILTON, *Quarter Sessions from Q. Elizabeth to Q. Anne* (1878), p. 12.

colation and lapse of time. Any comparison with present rates would involve an extended calculation of the difference in prices and in the value of money—loosely estimated to have been five times as much as today. But something may be learned of the discrimination between women and men. In 1610 the county of Rutland decided that a bailiff who had charge of at least two ploughlands was to be given 52s. per annum, while a woman who could cook and bake, brew, make malt, and superintend the under servants was put down at 26s. 8d.<sup>1</sup> Similar cases might be cited; but although large numbers of farm laborers were boarded by the employer, there is uncertainty in regard to the bailiff. At Theydon Gerdon in 1615 men hired as domestic servants were paid 13s. 4d. per quarter; women, at most, 12s. 6d.<sup>2</sup> There is a record of special interest concerning the annual wages of the household at Wormleighton in the opening of the seventeenth century. One man and one woman were paid each 10*£*. Among the lower servants, with the exception of one man who had 6s. 8d. less than any other person, the men received from 3s. 4d. to 6s. 8d. more than the women.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Joyce Jefferies, of Hereford and Worcestershire, the solitary mistress of a considerable household, apparently gave higher wages to some of her women than to any man in her retinue except the steward.<sup>4</sup> Such instances were rare indeed. Not only were the wages of the man higher, but the value of his livery, which was often a perquisite, must have exceeded that of the gown given to the woman. The bargain between master or mistress and servant was, after all, a private matter. The law fixed the maximum of wages, but the covenant-penny often sealed an agreement which, in addition to a smaller sum, called for a second-hand gown, or, perchance, for “an apron, a payr of hose and shoes.” The plan devised in the fifth year of Elizabeth’s reign proved difficult of execution. Thirty-four years later, as again in the second year of James I., Parliament although claiming that the “Law hath been found beneficial for

<sup>1</sup> ROGERS, vol. vi. p. 692.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 623.

<sup>2</sup> ROGERS, vol. vi. p. 630.

<sup>4</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxxvii. p. 198.

the commonwealth," acknowledged that wages had "not been rated and proportioned according to the plenty, scarcity, necessity, and respect of the Time, which was politically intended by the said act,"<sup>1</sup> and endeavored to perfect the law.

The woman who scrubbed and washed, who grasped at any day's toil that came to hand, and did "the meanest chares," was of the great class that filled the chinks in the body politic. In the fifteenth century her kind had served as assistants to masons, thatchers, and tilers;<sup>2</sup> but whether that custom had gone by does not appear. Happy her lot when a regular task fell in her way, as did the sweeping of the market-place, once upon a time, in Stratford-on-Avon. For her who "kept the gardin at Whitehall" in the days of Edward VI., there was the godsend of an occasional fee from a sightseer. Now, a poor woman might earn 2s. 8d. in "skowrynge the vessell[s] and Dressyng the howse by vi Dayes" for the Stationers' Company (1559); or, again, luck might drop 2s. in her way (1590) for reserving a "Standinge in Paules churcheyarde"<sup>3</sup> for certain late comers on some public occasion. But the charwoman's dependence was, perforce, upon such as the lodgers in shabby chambers, whom Dekker depicts, giving sixpence a week for the care of a room, or the housewives who hired at their "pleasures for a trifle and for a small time."<sup>3</sup> The law had its eye upon her, compelling her to labor on the pain of imprisonment, lest she prove troublesome to the state. The poet, at rare intervals, used her wretchedness to point a simile, but no man wrote her history.

In the dawn of a summer morning, many a maid with her shining pail went afield, brushing the dew from the grass as she sang snatches of old songs or called to the distant cows. Isaac Walton thought it "not without cause that our good Queen Elizabeth did so often wish herself a milkmaid all the month of May." Like the queen, he saw the idyllic side of rural life. The dairy had its poetry and its prose for mistress and maid.

<sup>1</sup> 39 Eliz., chap. xii. 2 James I., chap. vi.

<sup>2</sup> ARBER, vol. i. pp. 109, 547.

<sup>3</sup> *Letter sent by Maydens of London*, pp. 10-11.

The average towns-folk found nothing attractive in the gentlewoman who, in summer heats and autumn mists, took her accustomed way to the pastures to look after her cows and calves. There were titled ladies who gave personal care at every point, and who had no liking for the "cleane-fingered girle" that held aloof from work.

Her dairy was the pride of the English housewife. The very poor did sometimes come into the possession of a single cow, and thereafter, if the treasure were not speedily lost for debt, her good man had his "mease of milk" before going to his work, and her schoolboy had butter for his bread.

"Why, sir," protests a laborer in one of Robert Greene's pamphlets, "my cow is a Commonwealth to me: for first, sir, she allows me, my wife and sonne, for to banquet ourselves withal, Butter, Cheese, Whey, Curds, Creame, Sod-milk, raw-milke, Sower-milke, Sweete-milk, and butter-milke."<sup>1</sup>

Whether Joan or "my lady," the mistress was early at her post, to work or to direct, and to learn the latest pranks of

Mab, the Mistriss Fairy,  
That doth nightly rob the Dairy,  
And can hurt or help the churning.<sup>2</sup>

she must see that the rooms were kept in spotless order, and every vessel, whether "of wood, earth, or lead," immaculate. It was not hurtful to the daintiest hands, in the absence of other instrument,<sup>3</sup> to work the butter and shape it into balls. To make a fine "dische of butter, a soft cheese, or somme clouted creme"<sup>4</sup> was held a faultless accomplishment in a countess; but she met with the derision of the countryside if her interest led her to attend to the sale of her products. It was only the thrifty gentlewoman, or one of humbler station who might openly count her gains from her dairy. The good-wife who lent a hand in the milking rode to market with her butter unquestioned, or peddled her cream from door to door in the neighboring town; and the milkmaid with her farm-horse bearing the tankards of milk in panniers upon his back was a familiar sight on the highways.

<sup>1</sup> *Complete Works* (1881-1886), vol. xiv. p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> MARKHAM, pp. 146, 147.

<sup>2</sup> JONSON, *Entertainment at Althrope*.

<sup>4</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxvii. p. 340.

By the time of Charles I., the fame of the Cheshire cheese had spread far and wide. Other shires went thither for their cows; they even imported their dairy-maids thence, but without success. The one rival was Somersetshire. There, in the parish of Cheddar, the housewives of every degree joined in cheese-making, with the result that theirs was "the best and biggest in England."<sup>1</sup>

The domain of the housekeeper stretched more widely still. The watching and hiving of the bees, the rearing of the poultry, occasionally the care of the flocks, belonged to her; and no countess of Northumberland took truer satisfaction in her "fed fowle," than did one Goody Beckenton in the six chickens which she presented to Lord Ellesmere when Queen Elizabeth graced him with a visit.

The English garden in olden times afforded a curious variety. It furnished adornment for the house and supplies the kitchen. There were sops-in-wine, and cowslips, and columbine, and heartsease; there, too, were rosemary, and hyssop, and fennel, and thyme, and many a plant unknown to the modern market. It produced some vegetables and an endless succession of herbs. In the earlier part of the period such vegetables as were used by the wealthy were often imported. "Seventy years since," said Sir Thomas Fuller, we "hardly had a messe of Rath-ripe Pease, but from Holland, which were dainties for Ladies, they came so far and cost so dear."<sup>2</sup> In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, however, the gardens, even among the poor, began to yield radishes, melons, parsnips, cabbages, carrots, and turnips. Some small fruits were to be found there. The barberry, raspberry, gooseberry, and especially the strawberry, were coming into cultivation, and were high in favor. Whether large or small, the garden was an annex to the house. Its fruits, flowers and herbs bore witness to the thrift of the mistress. Such volumes as Tussar's *Book of Huswifery* professed to give her specific directions for its cultivation, and sometimes

<sup>1</sup> FULLER, *Worthies* (1811), vol. i. p. 181; vol. ii. p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> FULLER, vol. ii. p. 353.

extended her province to the flax field and the corn. Gardening became the rich woman's pastime and a profitable business for the poor woman.<sup>1</sup> It is safe to conclude that the widow Nachine Hills, a certain Protestant refugee, was far from the only one to live solely by gardening.<sup>2</sup>

The gardens gave pleasant and healthful employment; the fields, for the most part, heavy labor. Yet women were glad of an opportunity for the latter; and if any proved unwilling, the statute of laborers was again ready to press the unemployed into service. But coercion, if needed, did not always come from the law. Poverty was a still harder task-master,<sup>3</sup> and the entries of wages paid to couples, man and woman, tell of the homes where the wife's earnings had to eke out those of the husband.<sup>4</sup> Women seem to have done the most of the weeding. The hay field especially was theirs. They were largely in the majority among the hop-pickers. They reaped grain, swingled hemp, picked oakum, dipped sheep, and served as common laborers.<sup>5</sup> Their wages varied greatly, not only in different periods, but in the same season. At Wormleighton, in 1601, the haymakers were paid 6d. per day in early summer, and but half as much in July. Undoubtedly laborers were more easily found as the haying advanced. Men received 6d. a day for mowing nettles, and from 6d. to 7d. for thrashing grain. Some twenty years later, the men and women working side by side in the meadows at Theydon Gerdon were paid 10d. and 8d. respectively; at Oxford a little earlier, 8d. and 6d. One entry shows that women, presumably for the same kind of labor, were given a penny more than boys. In the hop fields, where the advantage lay in deft fingers rather than in strength, there was a difference in Essex,

<sup>1</sup> ROGERS, vol. vi. p. 628, 634.

<sup>2</sup> COOPER, *Lists of Foreign Protestants*, p. 11. "Gardening hath crept out of Holland to Sandwich in Kent, and thence into this county [Surrey], where, though they have given six pounds an Aker and upward, they have made their Rent, lived comfortably, and set many people on work. . . . 'Tis incredible how many poor people in London live thereon, so that in some seasons, Gardens feed more poor people than the Field." — FULLER, vol. ii. pp. 353.

<sup>3</sup> ROGERS, vol. iv. p. 733.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, vol. vi. p. 633.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, pp. 619-639, 696.

in 1614, of 4d. a day in favor of the men. These examples are drawn from the accounts of wages actually paid. In the justices' rates, the discrimination was usually greater.<sup>1</sup>

J. E. Thorold Rogers, who took special notice of women's earnings in agriculture, claimed that, in the fifteenth century, their work of "an unskilled kind was equally well paid with that of men." Elsewhere, he referred to the general rise in wages at the close of the civil war, and showed that, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, the average weekly wage for women engaged in such common tasks as hoeing and weeding was 2s. 6¾d. as compared with 2s. 3d. in the sixty years subsequent to 1582.<sup>2</sup> But he did not call attention to a point which his tables seem to prove, that, in some sections, the increase in men's wages was four times as great as in women's.<sup>3</sup>

As a general thing it was no longer a castle that was left to the wife's care in her husband's absence, but a home and lands, perhaps herds and flocks and growing grain which demanded her constant oversight. It is evident that the average English-woman was capable and reliable. She was interested in all that concerned the family. The wife of many a grazier could judge of the weight and value of a fattened ox as quickly and accurately as her husband.<sup>4</sup> It was not the practice, as in Ireland,<sup>5</sup> to lay upon the wife the care of both household and fields. But now and then a husband was quite content to drop all responsibility upon the shoulders of his helpmeet, and to profit by her forethought and wise management.

The women landholders of England were not all of the pattern of Anne, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery,<sup>6</sup> or of Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury.<sup>7</sup> Each of these women,

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*, pp. 623, 629-633, 692.

<sup>2</sup> ROGERS, *Six Centuries*, p. 329; *Agriculture and Prices*, vol. iv. p. 495; vol. v. pp. xii, 642.

<sup>3</sup> ROGERS, *Agriculture and Prices*, vol. vi. p. 694.

<sup>4</sup> HARRISON, book iii. p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> SPENCER, *View of the State of Ireland* (1809), p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> *Harleian MSS.* 6177, pp. 138, 140 *et passim*.

<sup>7</sup> LODGE, *Illustrations of British History* (1838), vol. ii. pp. 94, 95.

after her own way, was eminently successful. But there were women who paid taxes on small holdings of ten acres, of five acres, and undoubtedly less. They sometimes had trouble with a neighbor over a growing crop, or the possession of the home. Was it because of poverty or sex? In 1593 their ancient customary was confirmed by "most of ye substantiall Inhabitants of Aston and Coat," a parish in Oxfordshire. Among the names of these well-to-do citizens may be found those of three women.<sup>1</sup> There were women farmers of all grades whose efforts were directed toward a prosperous estate and a pleasant home.

The acts of Parliament under Henry VIII. and Edward VI. for the dissolution of guilds made exception of the "fellowships of misteryes or craftes." But the guilds suffered both by the confiscation of property and the increase of rich manufacturers.<sup>2</sup> In such advantages as they had to offer women still had some part. Their training was assured. Public sentiment called for it. There were no spinning schools as in Germany, but every craftsman and craftswoman became a teacher. And in order that there should be no evasion, seven years of apprenticeship were, in most cases, demanded by law.<sup>3</sup>

Elizabethan women, if they chose, became bakers—not mere assistants, but proprietors—as their grandmothers had done time out of mind. When the mayor and burgesses of Hull had certain dealings with the bakers in 1598, one widow Arnold was of sufficient standing in that fraternity to take part in the negotiations.<sup>4</sup> Husband and wife did not always follow the same trade. Among the Protestant refugees living in Southwark was a certain tailor, Charles de Man. His wife, Edie, was officially recorded as a Dutch baker.<sup>5</sup> Baking and brewing had long been known as "huswives trades." The women in the latter calling were no longer "brewsters," but "breweresses" or brewers; and, sad to say, they were not always above the adulteration of their liquor.<sup>6</sup> Five women of the manor of Scotter were fined

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxxv. p. 474.

<sup>2</sup> BRENTANO, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> 5 Eliz., chap. iv.

<sup>4</sup> LAMBERT, *Two Thousand Years of Gild Life*, p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> COOPER, p. 92.

<sup>6</sup> "Such slights also haue the alewives for the utterance of this drinke that they will mixe it with rosen and salt." HARRISON, book ii. p. 161.



at one time for violation of the law in brewing or baking. Financially the women brewers were of all grades, from the one who brewed and sold in her home, to the owner of a brewery. There were probably many like Mrs. Jane Higgins of Hereford, and, in London, Mrs. James of Puddle-wharf, who dealt on a considerable scale. The curious may consult today the account "of such Beere as hath bene delyv'd to th' use of the Right Worr<sup>ll</sup> Edward Coke Esquyer Attorney-gen'all unto the Queen's most Excellent Ma<sup>tie</sup>, at London, beginning the fifte of Julye," and note that the amount, 15£.10s., was "Discharged the xxj of Nov. by me, Bridget Coke," that gentleman's wife, and acknowledged in due form "per me, Roger Osborne, for th' use of my Mrs. Mary James, bruer."<sup>1</sup>

Washing, of course, was woman's work. It was supposed to be at the feet of the whitsters and laundresses in Datchet-mead—or in the muddy ditch which bordered it—that Sir John Falstaff was so ignominiously thrown by Mrs. Ford's serving-men. As a business, washing offered little rivalry and, at times, good remuneration. The washerwoman at New College, Oxford, in 1545, was paid 40s. by the year with board, as great a wage as that of the manciple and of the head cook, who was undoubtedly a man, and twice that of either the butler or the gardener.<sup>2</sup> A certain student at Oxford, in 1605, paid his laundress 2s. a quarter; a boy at Winchester, in 1623, 1s. 6d. per quarter.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Dinghen van den Plasse, the Flemish woman who introduced the art of starching in 1564, and made her fortune thereby, opened a branch of this calling, which seems to have been kept long distinct. A half century afterward Ben Jonson spoke of a "blew-starch woman," an epithet which presumably was drawn from her business. Prices were good, and the many incidental references scattered through Elizabethan literature show that the starchwomen were a numerous class.

The manufacture of cloth was largely a cottage industry.

<sup>1</sup> EDEN, *The State of the Poor* (1799), vol. iii. ap. cxii.

<sup>2</sup> ROGERS, vol. iii. p. 663.

<sup>3</sup> *Trevelyan Papers*, part 3, p. 84. HUTTON, *Correspondence*, pp. 237, 238.

The "spinsters" were maids, wives, or widows, as it chanced. The location frequently determined the nature of the product. In the neighborhood of Yarmouth, where fish-nets were in steady demand, £2000 or more were paid annually to the women and children who spun the twine.<sup>1</sup> Maidstone, on the other hand, was the center of a colony of spinners, men and women, foreign by birth or descent, whose specialty was thread. The persons appointed in 1622 to investigate their number and condition thought them "of meane ability." The threadmakers themselves complained of the decay of their trade through the importation of Flemish thread. Among the silkwinders of Southwark might have been found the woman who had migrated from the chalk downs of Berkshire, and the one whose memories of an early home beyond the sea had been cherished now these thirty years. There were "twisterers" and hosiers and weavers of divers descriptions. A certain widow Revell who carried on her trade of tape-weaving near the Bankside employed at least one assistant.<sup>2</sup> "My wife is learning now, sir, to weave inkle," says the steward in *The Scornful Lady*.<sup>3</sup>

Silks and says and linen cloths came from women's looms. And day after day, women "sempsters" and tailoresses shaped these products into garments. The struggle of the unfortunate sewer for bread was pictured from the pulpit as it is today.

The thoughtful poor woman that hath her small children standing at her knee and hanging on her breast, she worketh with her needle and laboureth with her fingers, her candle goeth not out by night . . . Sometimes she singeth "Have mercy on me Lord," . . . sometimes "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord." . . . And when all the week is ended, she can hardly earn salt for her watergruel to feed on upon Sunday.<sup>4</sup>

It is impossible to judge of the fairness of prices — as, for instance, 3s. 6d. for the making of three ruffs (1624)<sup>5</sup> — without a knowledge of the labor expended. The conditions found in

<sup>1</sup> NASHE, *Complete Works* (1883-4), vol. v. p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> COOPER, pp. 11-21, 96, 97.

<sup>3</sup> BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, *The Scornful Lady*, Act v. sc. iii.

<sup>4</sup> Symonds (1609) in NEILL'S *English Colonization of America*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xv. p. 160.

the best shops are sketched in an old play, in which a young woman declares her intention to return —

To mistress Holland, and to making shirts  
And bands again ; —

a plan at which her brother scouts :

— Faith, I should laugh  
To see you there again, and there serve out  
The rest of your indentures, by managing  
Your needle well, and making nightcaps by  
A chafing-dish in winter mornings, to keep  
Your fingers pliant.<sup>1</sup>

For the “great sempstress” or the tailor who could keep a shop, prospects were brighter. As late as 1542, women who followed the calling of merchant-tailor kept their apprentices. Eleven years earlier, the tailors of Exeter had granted to widows alone, of all their gild, the privilege of keeping as many assistants as desired if they bore “scotte and lotte, yeve and yeld w<sup>t</sup> the occupacion.” Women were evidently members of the company in the beginning of the next century, and there seems to be no record of their subsequent exclusion from the trade.<sup>2</sup>

Lace-making was of recent introduction, and both men and women were charmed with the filmy web. Did the women whose shuttles of bone flew busily in and out fare better than the seamstresses? They sang at their work sometimes, but the songs were plaintive if one may judge from that which, in *Twelfth Night*, caught the fancy of Orsino's melancholy mood :

It is old and plain :  
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun  
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones  
Do use to chant it.

By the time of Charles I. the bone had been exchanged for wooden bobbins, and Honiton was sending weekly consignments to London, but the lace was “bone-lace” still.<sup>3</sup> Country folk made lavish use of a blue lace of thread known as Coventry blue,

<sup>1</sup> MAYNE, *The City Match*, Act II. sc. iv.

<sup>3</sup> FULLER, vol. i. p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> CLODE, *Early History of the Guild of Merchant Taylors*, part I, p. 42; part 2. p. 126. SMITH, *English Gilds*, p. 329.

a thread also used in embroidery. Although there were men in the same industry, the occasional references to embroiderers are usually to the other sex. Most articles of apparel offered a field for these workers. If the Puritan embroiderers—and there were not a few of them—found some brightness in their art, they yet turned it to curious account. Witness this passage from a play which tells of one,

a Puritan at her needle, too:  
 . . . . . for flowers  
 She'll make church histories; . . .  
 My smock sleeves have such holy embroideries,  
 And are so learned, that I fear in time  
 All my apparell will be quoted by  
 Some pure instructor.<sup>1</sup>

It is not the only reference to such "histories" which may be found in the Elizabethan drama. "Embroidered stockings, cut-work smocks, and shirts,"<sup>2</sup> even Ben Jonson as he moralizes upon such finery, leaves the conviction that the author of the *Anatomy of Abuses*<sup>3</sup> does not greatly exaggerate in his description of silk wrought shirts that cost the wearer "some ten shillynges, some twentie, some fortie, some fue pound, some twentie Nobles, and (which is horrible to heare) some ten pounce a peece."

In midsummer, 1602, the Queen became, for three days, the guest of Lord Ellsmere at Harefield. The illuminations, necessarily an important feature in the arrangements, involved a bill of 6*£* 6*s* from "Mrs. Shewemaker the Tallowe Chaundler."<sup>4</sup> At almost every turn, some woman in some way was earning her livelihood. Down by St. Katherine's dock under the shadow of the Tower, a widow Lambert followed the cutler's trade. Across the river in Bermondsey, where still the great warehouses are packed with wool, one Judith Rutter, "wool-kommer," employed her three servants.<sup>5</sup> The craft of tanners was rigid in its enforcement of apprenticeship upon all who would enter that calling. Yet in the act of Parliament secured in the second year

<sup>1</sup> MAYNE, *The City Match*, Act II. sc. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *The Devil is an Ass*, Act. I. sc. i.

<sup>3</sup> STUBBES, *Anatomy of Abuses* (ed. Furnivall), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> *Egerton Papers*, p. 346.

<sup>5</sup> COOPER, pp. 2, 98.

of James I., the wives and daughters of the tanners were made an exception.<sup>1</sup>

But in no trade is the presence of women of greater interest than in that of printing. Among the London publishers<sup>2</sup> and printers of the period from 1553 to 1640 are the names of more than seventy women. They were widows who had received the business with a husband's estate. Their efforts, however, were not always confined to a profitable but speedy closing of the establishment. They often ran on for two or three years, and no less than eighteen remained at the head of their several houses for terms extending from five to nineteen years. Among the thirteen who were both printers and publishers, Elizabeth All-de carried on her business from 1628 until her death twelve years later; and Joan Broome, whose work was cut short by her death in 1601, was for ten years the head of the printing and publishing house at the sign of the "Great Bible at the Great North Door of Paul's Church."<sup>3</sup> A peculiar history is attached to the names of two others, Anne Purslowe who, for seven years, was known as a master printer and a publisher, and Anne Griffin who conducted a similar business for at least nineteen years. Printing was more or less under governmental control in the Elizabethan age, the surveillance varying with the supposed need. In a list of printing houses, dating from about 1635, it is stated in connection with the business of each of these women that "haviland, yo[u]ng and fletcher haue this yet." John Haviland, Robert Young and Miles Fletcher were then master-printers with their three several printing-houses and other extensive interests. The list mentioned above, after some statements as to a printing-business then recently purchased by one Bishop, adds: "It is thought that Bishop is but used in it, and yat the estate is in haviland, yo[u]ng and fletcher['s hands]." The editor of that invaluable work, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of*

<sup>1</sup> 2 Jac. I. chap. xxii.

<sup>2</sup> As all the women printers were also publishers, the two are here considered together.

<sup>3</sup> ARBER, vol. iv. p. 507; vol. v. p. 203, *et passim*.

*Stationers*, says in reference to these three entries : "In Charles I.'s reign, there came a new development in the Trade. Robert Young, Miles Flesher and John Haviland formed themselves into a syndicate, and became privately the real owners of Printing businesses carried on ostensibly in other names."<sup>1</sup>

Anne Griffin was left a widow in 1620 with a printing-house and debts amounting to £800. She took John Haviland as a partner and enlarged her business. On June 7, 1621, the two "entered for their copies," on the stationers' record, eleven works, an unusually large number. From that time on until 1627 their entries indicate a growing trade. When, after an interval of nearly eight years, the name of Mistress Griffin reappears in the *Registers*, it relates to a book entered "for her copy." John Haviland is heard of no more in connection with her copyrights. For two years her entries — not a small number for that day — were in her name alone. In 1637 she was one of several who reprinted a work entitled *The Holy Table*, an act which called forth a new Star-Chamber decree; and in the reapportionment of licenses to master-printers, Anne Griffin was displaced by her son Edward. If Haviland, Young, and Fletcher were known to be the responsible parties in her house, they were, nevertheless, on the new list of the twenty master-printers of London. But Anne Griffin was not to be disheartened. Her publishing business went on.<sup>2</sup>

Women seem to have been more venturesome than men — not so much in violating copyright, as in printing without that registry which showed the sanction of the Bishop of London and the wardens of the company. In a single instance the Stationers' Company assumed the debts of a woman publisher in consideration of all her books and copyrights. For the most part, these women appear to have been successful. A hint of the value of their investments is found where a certain Margaret Hodgets sells all her right and title in GRANADOES *meditacons*, the *Mothers Legacye*, the *Practise of pietye*, and *Sandes, his travelles* for

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*, vol. iii. p. 701, 703; vol. v. p. xxx.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, vol. iii. p. 704; vol. iv. pp. 55-184, 333-384, 424, 528, 532.

forty-five pounds.<sup>1</sup> One woman made her mark in place of signature. She is named in the editor's list as a publisher for a year. But it is not safe to say that her career as a publisher ended there. One who in 1625 signed herself in a fair hand Ellen C. Boyle, is recorded in the same list as a publisher in that year only. The *Registers* do not mention her again. Yet her husband died in 1615. Of all the books entered at the Stationers' hall as his copies, he had made an assignment of but one. What of the widow and the estate during that decade? <sup>2</sup>

One Mistress Toye was a prolific publisher of ballads, and in 1558 she obtained the sole "lycense to prynte" the Latin catechism. The patent for the printing of law books and the copyrights of the largest music stock of the time were, for a season, vested in women. Much of the world's best literature passed through the hands of these publishers. Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Spenser, Homer, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Cervantes—these are some of the authors with whose writings they had to do. In 1637 a widow Allot sold her right and title to sixty works, among them a share in sixteen of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>3</sup> One of the first steps taken in her business by a certain Hannah Barret was the sale of two now unknown works, apparently to enable her to increase her already large investment in the copyrights of the works of Francis Bacon. She published the last author's edition of the *Essays*, a pirated edition having been issued the year before from the publishing house of Elizabeth Jaggard.<sup>4</sup> In 1645 there came from the press a small octavo volume by John Milton. It was printed, as its title-page shows, "by Ruth Raworth for Humphrey Moseley; and are to be sold at the signe of the Princes Arms in Paul's Churchyard." This first edition of his collected poems included *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas* and *Comus*.<sup>5</sup>

The queen led the way in foreign trade, and risked many a

<sup>1</sup> *Id.*, vol. iv. p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, vol. iv. p. 388.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, vol. iii. p. 424; vol. iv. p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> BACON, *Essays* (ed. Wright), p. xv.

<sup>5</sup> MASSON, *Life of Milton* (1859), vol. iii. p. 451.

private venture. She signed the charter of the first East India Company, in which women had their investments. The Countess of Cumberland's fifty pounds adventured in the first voyage, was a trifling sum compared with the £480 subscribed by plain Elizabeth Mosely whose name, perchance, is preserved in no other connection.<sup>1</sup> There were women—more often not of noble birth—who were shareholders in western colonies, owners of estates in the new world, and of merchant vessels on the sea.

The England of the thirteenth century had its Jewesses, as well as its Jews, upon whom it depended as money-lenders. In the sixteenth, no Hebrew was allowed to step upon its shores. But there were women to the manner born who added to their wealth, not only by loaning money, but by buying and selling land, timber, and other commodities. When Elizabeth, in a certain contingency, called for a loan of some £8000 from the London merchants, the Lady Joan Laxton advanced £1100 at the rate offered, 12 per cent. per annum. She was several times a creditor of the Crown.<sup>2</sup> There is trace of a woman's connection with the manufacture and sale of ordnance. The large majority of those engaged in traffic, however, bought and sold upon a smaller scale, and ranked below the gentry. Tradesmen were often assisted by their wives, if indeed they did not sometimes recognize them as partners. But the genuine shop-woman was sole proprietor, and was credited with such independence of her husband in business that she would "not be held to give him an account of her dealings eyther in retaile or wholesaile."<sup>3</sup> According to the dramatist, she was not seldom forced to revive the shattered means of her household through her own labors. "O sir," remarks one of Middleton's characters in speaking of a tobacconist, "'tis many a good woman's fortune, when her husband turns bankrout, to begin with pipes and set up again."<sup>4</sup> A tradeswoman's assistants were apt to be of her own sex; and,

<sup>1</sup> STEVENS, *Dawn of British Trade*, pp. 251, 261, 262.

<sup>2</sup> BURGON, *Life of Sir Thomas Gresham*, vol. ii. p. 343.

<sup>3</sup> POWELL, *Tom of all Trades*, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> MIDDLETON, *Roaring Girl*, Act II. sc. i.



while the maid in charge of the shop busied her fingers over the making of some article for the stock, she appealed to the passers-by after the usual manner of the clerk or apprentice:

—Sir, what is 't you buy ?

What is 't you lack, sir, calico, or lawn,

Fine cambric shirts, or bands, what will you buy ?<sup>1</sup>

There were feather-shops, clothing establishments and apothecaries' shops. There were thread-sellers like one Ann Hamlett of Cripplegate within, and dealers in peltry like the "conney-skin woman of Budge-Row." There were shops for the sale of wigs, and hosiers' shops. The widow who dwelt "at the hether end of Powles Churchyeard," just under the shadow of "my Lord Byshopp of London's gate," evidently dealt in a superior article of "worsted stockings" since a certain Mr. John Willoughby was so anxious to send to her for goods.<sup>2</sup> Until about 1570, the only silk shops in London were kept by women. The law had long acquiesced in their monopoly, and among them one Mistress Montague enjoyed the patronage of the queen. In 1564 three women who were neither printers nor publishers were entered in the hallbook as citizens and stationers.<sup>3</sup> Others might be discovered all the way down to the time of Pepys,<sup>4</sup> who one day wrote in his diary: "Then I looked in the Hall, and was told by my bookseller, Mrs. Michell,"—but the bookseller's remark matters less than the fact that her shop seems to have been an attractive haunt.

One Jane Williamson was officially registered as "by trade a merchaunte." Others of her class were not far to seek. In Colchester was to be found a good-wife Snace whose threads, laces, and other wares were imported from Holland;<sup>5</sup> and Jonson's "rich China-woman," whose costly stuffs from the Orient rivaled the attractions of the Royal Exchange, undoubtedly had her parallel in the capital.

The fashion of London daily resorted to the Exchange. Its

<sup>1</sup> DEKKER, *Shoemaker's Holiday*, Act IV. sc. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Trevelyan Papers*, part 3. p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> ARBER, vol. i. pp. 251, 254, 257.

<sup>4</sup> *Diary* (1893-6), vol. i. p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> COOPER, pp. 26, 71.

promenades were thronged with ladies and gentlemen. While milliners and other shop-women arranged their goods in the most attractive manner, above the chattering and laughter arose the cry of the maids, "Sir, what is't you lack?" Was it truth, or merely rancor against courtiers, which drew forth Robert Greene's assertion that finer workmanship and better values were to be had among the women of the Exchange than from the French?<sup>1</sup>

The Royal Exchange, with its hundred shops or more, was famous throughout the kingdom. But women's traffic prospered in other towns where they dealt in goods of many sorts from imports to the homeliest of English staples. John Shakespeare, glover, and wool dealer as well if tradition speak truth, may have encountered no rivalry while in trade; but he is said to have had a successor in one Joyce Hobday.<sup>2</sup>

In lowlier ranks were the butter-women and venders of produce at Newgate and other markets, and the souse-wives who sold pickled meats. "Have I not ta'en you from selling tripes in Eastcheap, and set you in my shop," exclaims Dekker's irate shoemaker?<sup>3</sup> The epicure might get his pheasant or the choicest partridges from some "good-wife Poulter," while the rank and file sought the stalls of the fish-wives of Turn-again lane or Billingsgate, a clannish rout of doubtful but lasting fame. At Bartholomew Fair,<sup>4</sup> if the playwright may be trusted, there were no stands more popular than those of the gingerbread-woman and the pig-woman. The latter provided for the public the special dainty of the occasion, young pig roasted to a turn. At a time when the plague was sweeping over London, it was said that the herb-women were among the few whose business continued to thrive<sup>5</sup>. It was a pleasant calling, that of the

—herb-woman

That sells away all her sweet herbs and nosegays;<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, vol. xi. p. 288.

<sup>3</sup> *Shoemaker's Holiday*, Act III. sc. ii.

<sup>2</sup> LEE, *Stratford-on-Avon* (1885), p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> JONSON, *Bartholomew Fair*, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> DEKKER, *Non-Dramatic Works* (1885), p. 274.

<sup>6</sup> MIDDLETON, *Women Beware Women*, Act II. sc. ii.

and the stands in Cheapside where she and her mates displayed their stock—abandoned in 1657 for a new market-place in Paul's Churchyard<sup>1</sup>—could not but have been an attractive spot.

Humbler than the keeper of the marketstall were the women whom Overbury called "pedleresses." There were indeed some traffickers, destitute of shop or stall, whose husbands bought eggs, chickens, and other provisions in different shires while they sold them to dealers in London or elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> But the true peddler did business on a narrower scale. Retailers of apples and oranges haunted the gates of the Royal Exchange. The "Katern-pear woman" had need to keep a watchful eye upon her fruit. Hawkers of lace and notions sought custom from house to house. The oyster-wife furnished writers with many a simile. She often made one of

--the ballad singer's auditory,  
Which hath at Temple Bar his standing chose,  
And to the vulgar sings an alehouse story.  
First stands a porter; then an oyster-wife  
Doth stint her cry, and stay her steps to hear him.<sup>3</sup>

In summer other sounds were to be heard—now a peddler crying "Buy any Scurvy-grass?" and again "the rod-woman—quick, quick, quick, buy my rosemary and bays?"<sup>4</sup> Country wives brought marrow-puddings and other edibles to tempt the palates of the towns-people. Undoubtedly the trucksters still bought their bread at the rate of thirteen loaves for a dozen, in which practice lay their profit, and delivered it at the homes of their customers. Of all who had to do with such traffic, the "Mercury women" who helped to spread abroad the fledgling news sheets were the most notable. It is not clear whether they appeared on the street. Let an old writer tell his own story:

We must come down to the reign of King James I. and that towards the latter end, when News began to be in fashion: and then, if I mistake not,

<sup>1</sup> DUGDALE, *Diary*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> HARRISON, book ii. p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> J. DAVIES, *Epigram* xxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> MIDDLETON, *Roaring Girl*, Act III. sc. ii.; *Blurt, Master-constable*, Act II. sc. ii.

began the use of Mercury women ; and they it was that dispersed them to the Hawker . . . . These Mercuries and Hawkers, their business at first was to disperse Proclamations, Orders of Council, and acts of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

The greater part of the inns in London were carried on by women. If the hostess were married, her husband usually followed some other vocation. In some counties, as in Hampshire and Essex, a fourth part or more of these houses were conducted in like manner. They were often barren of comforts, too often mere tippling-houses. When industrious and well qualified, the fame of "mine hostess" spread far and wide. Under her roof could be found fresh, sweet rooms with growing plants and the latest ballad. Now she was attending to the wants of a dismounting traveler, now

— in the kitchen 'mongst the maids,  
Spitting the meat 'gainst supper for my guess.<sup>2</sup>

She made her inn a haven where savory food and lavender-scented sheets invited the wayfarer to refreshment and rest. Akin to her was the keeper of the ordinary. Whether her house were of the three half-penny variety or more pretentious, her aim was thrift. The satirist even suspected her of entreating the presence of the poet at her table for the sake of the custom drawn thither by his *bon-mots*.

It was a hard world for the poor—that "merrie England." They had their holidays and their junketings, but it was upon the principle of "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." What wonder that women as well as men sought their fortunes in a new land! Some there were whose timidity led them to endure wretchedness in a familiar spot rather than follow a husband to a strange country. Margaret Winthrop, when speaking of such a one, did "marvel what mettle she is made of."<sup>3</sup> But stouter hearts outnumbered them. Hundreds crossed the sea to work cheerfully beside their husbands until, perchance, left to fight the battle alone. Some,

<sup>1</sup> NICHOLS, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> GREENE, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, sc. ii.

<sup>3</sup> WINTHROP, *History of New England*, vol. i. p. 437.

like those three-score "honestly-educated" young women who frankly sought husbands and homes in Virginia, were helped on their way. Others, widows with children and women friendless and alone, depended upon their own right hands, and now and then achieved success. Their undertaking, so little marked at the time, so lightly mentioned today, demanded the courage of heroes.

It is impossible to trace more than the beginnings of professional life for women in the age of Elizabeth. Little can be told concerning the most of those whose calling suggests any approach to such a claim. There were nurses for children, women who looked after their bodily wants and amused them with wondrous tales at bed time; no more. Governess was often but another name for the same functionary. But the career of school-mistress was open. The word recurs in the writings of the time, but rarely a hint of the duties of her office. There were preachers known by that title if not ordained. What facts underlie the satirical pamphlet entitled *A Discoverie of Six Women Preachers in Middlesex, Kent, Cambridgeshire, and Salisbury*, printed in 1641, cannot easily be determined. "In ancient times I have read of Prophetesses, but not untill of late heard of women Preachers," says the author, who attributes their course to a desire for superiority. Whatever the motive, there were women who preached to large audiences. Of those found among the early Baptists, one Mrs. Attaway, "the mistress of all the she-preachers in Coleman street," was given pre-eminence.<sup>1</sup> The midwife, a personage of greater standing than at present, was forced to obtain a license in order to administer baptism, but the amount of her scientific training is uncertain.

The practice of medicine by women was extensive. Complaints of them were heard early in the reign of Henry VIII. when Parliament accused them of employing "noyous" medicines and "nothyng metely," and forbade all persons unexamined and unauthorized to exercise that profession.<sup>2</sup> The law evidently became a dead letter. The people in remote districts

<sup>1</sup> MASSON, *Milton*, vol. iii. p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> 3 Hen. VIII., chap. xi.

found "kitchen physic" the most available. The common folk believed it a saving, and often as satisfactory, to employ "a good old woman." To such a one did the worthy Able Druggier intrust his case :

Yes, faith, she dwells in Sea-coal-lane, did cure me  
With sodden ale and pellitory o' the wall :  
Cost me but two pence.<sup>1</sup>

That some really turned their aptitude to account is upheld by this "Itm, pd . . . . to Mary le Straunge for to pay Sharman for her leche craft . . . . xviii s" <sup>2</sup> Many a so-called witch, as well as the average gentlewoman, possessed a creditable knowledge of herbs. Lecky quotes the investigations of Michelet in proof of the success of the first.<sup>3</sup> The latter frequently extended her studies into the domain of chemistry, and her skill in surgery was sometimes considerable. The very writer that railed at these women confessed their popularity. Their generosity was at the root of much opposition. Quackery existed as a matter of course, but that was not confined to women. The regular practitioner "cursed the old gentlewomen and their charity that made his trade their alms."<sup>4</sup> Prejudice added edge to his bitterness. His only comfort was in the assurance of his friends "that the depth and secrets of this most excellent Art of Physic are far beyond the capacity of the most skilful woman, as lodging only in the brest of learned Professors."<sup>5</sup>

"Professors," women were not ; for such entries as "Sophere Raymen, widow and surrurgion"<sup>6</sup> prove nothing more than practice. But if long study could fit women for physicians, then were some of no mean qualifications. Sir Thomas More wished his daughter Margaret to spend her life in the study of medicine and divinity. His thought was of her health and culture. Lady Apsley, however, whose husband, Sir Allen, was sometime Lieutenant of the Tower of London, was actuated by the longing to alleviate suffering, and she strove by all means at her command

<sup>1</sup> JONSON, *Alchemist*, Act III. sc. iv.

<sup>4</sup> EARLE, *Microcosmography* (1867), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxv. p. 547.

<sup>5</sup> MARKHAM, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Rationalism* (1872), vol. i. p. 92, n.

<sup>6</sup> COOPER, p. 89.

to attain the power. The emergencies of civil war showed her daughter, Lucy Hutchinson, far from inefficient in surgery. Lady Anne Halkett was probably more widely known. After the battle of Dunbar she dressed the wounds of sixty soldiers from the royalist army.<sup>1</sup> Her fame extended to Holland. The rise of a kindly and more liberal spirit is shown by the fact that regular physicians sometimes sent patients to her. Her success where they had failed proves that their confidence was not misplaced.

"Women generally do little who are the half of mankind," was the criticism of Sir Thomas More when contrasting the nations about him with his own Utopians. Not far from the same time, his friend Erasmus was busy over the *Colloquies*. As if in rejoinder he made a character affirm: "There are some affairs that we have to settle with the men, too, who exclude us from all honorable employments and only make us their laundresses and their cooks." With a glint of satire there was much earnest, as the context shows. They passed away in the dawn of the Elizabethan age.

If the accusation of idleness still needs reply, what has gone before would better have remained unwritten. Cooks those women were — such as nature or a scanty training made them — and laundresses sometimes. The facts reveal that they were much more. And yet, women often had much ado to "get leave to work." The wish — half fretful, half divine — to earn her right to a place in the world, invaded the breast even of Lady Jane Grey, descendant of kings and queens, as she pined under imprisonment. Much of the progress made by Elizabethan women was lost in the next age; but that impulse to earn a foothold, to justify existence, never died out.

ELLA CAROLINE LAPHAM.

<sup>1</sup> HALKETT, *Diary*, pp. 62, 66.